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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 3178
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RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 4712
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2386
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 000756

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [IN](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOISTS ON CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT,
CONSTITUTION & PEACE PROCESS

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires, a.i., Jeffrey Moon. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

11. (SBU) Summary: The Maoist Central Committee,s top priority is to force a parliamentary debate on the "civilian supremacy" issue and then to establish a consensus government under Maoist leadership. The Maoists will not agree to a "high-level mechanism" for resolving inter-party disputes on constitutional and peace process issues until a new government is established. The Maoists believe that "it is our right" to lead the next government, but it is unclear whether former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, aka "Prachanda", would return to that position in a new Maoist-led government. End Summary.

12. (C) The following report is based on Charge,s August 13 meeting with Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Politburo member of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist and member of the Constituent Assembly (CA). Mahara also leads the Maoists, Foreign Affairs and Organization Departments, was Minister for Information and Communications during the Maoist government of 2008-2009, and was the Maoists, chief peace negotiator during the insurgency.

Immediate Priorities

13. (SBU) The Maoists decided at their recent Central Committee meetings that their top short-term priority is a parliamentary debate on the constitutionality of the President,s April 2009 decision to reinstate the Chief of the Army Staff, General Katawal. The Maoists seek only an open discussion of this "civilian supremacy" issue and do not intend to demand the President,s removal. They recognize that they might lose a parliamentary vote on the constitutionality question and would stand down on this issue if that occurred. They believe, however, that leaders of the two other major parties, the Nepali Congress (NC) and the United Marxist-Leninist (UML), fear embarrassment and oppose the request because a significant percentage of NC and UML members would side with the Maoist position.

14. (SBU) In the meantime, the Maoists have scheduled peaceful demonstrations over the coming month not to create political disturbances, but rather to force the government to debate the "civilian supremacy" issue. When Charge asked whether the Maoists were certain the demonstrations would not

result in violence, our source acknowledged the possibility that they could. He was confident, however, that the scope of the demonstrations could be contained and asserted that protests were the only mechanism available for forcing the issue. The Maoists believe that the "civilian supremacy" issue will be addressed and demonstrations concluded by the end of September.

"Consensus" Government

¶5. (SBU) Several other important decisions were also made during recent Central Committee meetings. The Maoists decided that there should be a "national consensus government." They are confident that no significant political initiatives are possible without their support and that "it is our right" to lead the next government. As a last option, they might be prepared to accept the leadership of another party if "all other issues are settled to our satisfaction."

¶6. (SBU) Other top Maoist priorities are drafting the new constitution and advancing the peace process. The Maoists are not prepared to address those issues, however, until the "consensus government" is formed. They maintain contact with the other parties, but the "high-level mechanism" (HLM) intended to resolve inter-party disputes has yet to be activated. There is a working group comprised of two representatives from each of the major parties that is discussing terms of reference for the HLM. The Maoists fear other parties will use the HLM to resolve "governance" issues

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and thereby support the M.K. Nepal government, so the Maoists will decline to participate until they belong to the ruling coalition.

¶7. (SBU) If the Maoists lead the next government, it is unclear who would be Prime Minister. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, aka "Prachanda", has told party colleagues he wants to focus on management of the party and does not seek the Prime Minister's seat, but Dahal is the only Maoist who could win complete consensus within the party. Thus, he might return as Prime Minister if only to prevent divisions within Maoist ranks over leadership issues. Our source categorically rejected rumors currently circulating in Kathmandu that NC leader G.P. Koirala might become Prime Minister again in a government that includes the Maoists.

Constitution & Peace Process

¶8. (SBU) The Maoists recognize the importance of drafting the new constitution and have decided not to disrupt any of the drafting committees. They favor a multiparty democracy with a unicameral parliament and a directly elected president. They also propose a procedure for the parliament to remove the president with a two-thirds majority. Ideally, the Maoists would like to create a consensus government -- presumably under their leadership -- within a multi-party system that can survive for the next 20 to 30 years. They favor a centralized state that includes federal districts and accommodates the federalism demands of minorities.

¶9. (SBU) The major sticking point in the peace process is the Maoist Army cantonment and integration issue. The Maoists insist that their combatants must be accommodated in a respectful manner and integrated into the military, using appropriate suitability criteria, or accommodated into other security forces, such as industrial or transportation security forces. The Maoists recognize that other major parties have historically lacked confidence in Maoist promises on the peace process, and are suspicious that the party ultimately wants to go back to war. The Maoists deny those suspicions and expect that the HLM -- if and when it is established -- will be the forum for resolving both constitutional and peace process issues.

Ideology

¶10. (SBU) The recent Central Committee meetings also included discussions of ideology. The party has decided that the theories of Mao and Stalin are not applicable to Nepal, and that the Maoists must adopt an approach that takes into account Nepal's current realities. The leadership has made strong headway in convincing party members of the need for changes in theory and rhetoric. For example, Maoist statements no longer refer to India and the United States as "expansionist" and "imperialist", respectively. The Maoist drift away from the influence of communist parties in India and the United States also reflects this change.

¶11. (SBU) Charge asked in that context whether press reports of Dahal's comments during his current trip to Europe were accurate. Specifically, he inquired whether the BBC accurately reported that Dahal urged Asian nations to work together to reduce American influence in the region. Our contact said he could not confirm the accuracy of those press reports, but was certain that views quoted by the BBC did not reflect Central Committee policy.

Dahal's European Trip

¶12. (C) There has been much speculation in Kathmandu about the itinerary and purpose of Dahal's trip to Europe. The British Ambassador told Charge on August 11 that the Maoists declined a British offer to arrange official meetings and provide any other assistance possible. According to our source, Dahal's trip to Europe was a private visit at the invitation of Nepali friends. Dahal also planned to visit

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Belarus, but we have no additional details.

¶13. (C) Comment: One rumor currently circulating is that Mahara might be the next Maoist Prime Minister. The rumor probably started because some observers think India is maneuvering to install a pro-Indian, Maoist Prime Minister. Mahara is a possible candidate because he is close to Dahal, has broad support within the Maoist party, and is relatively pro-Indian. When asked about Indian attitudes regarding the next government, Mahara noted that "India always plays a role in Nepal's politics," but observed that the Maoist party would decide on its own leaders. He also expressed concern that India might try to weaken the Maoists by supporting candidates that would create splits within Maoist leadership circles. End Comment.

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